keys 120, a portion of which include a glyph of an upper case letter and a glyph of an associate lower case letter thereon.

[0047] FIG. 11 illustrates an embodiment of the teaching apparatus 100 of the present invention. This apparatus 100 may be constructed as discussed above with regard to FIG. 2a from an ergonomic keyboard 104' and a keyboard overlay 102'. Alternatively, this embodiment of the teaching apparatus 100 may comprise a keyboard 118 having a plurality of individual keys 120, a portion of which include a glyph of an upper case letter and a glyph of an associate lower case letter thereon.

Amendments to existing claims:

12. (Once Amended) The teaching apparatus of claim ~~11~~15, wherein said glyph of an upper-case letter and said glyph of said lower-case letter are positioned in a horizontal relationship to one another in a plane of said keys.

13. (Once Amended) The teaching apparatus of claim ~~11~~15, wherein said glyph of an upper-case letter and said glyph of said lower-case letter are positioned in a diagonal relationship to one another in a plane of said keys.

14. (Once Amended) The teaching apparatus of claim ~~11~~15, wherein said glyph of an upper-case letter and said glyph of said lower-case letter are positioned in a vertical relationship to one another in a plane of said keys.

15. (Once Amended) ~~The teaching apparatus of claim 11~~A computer-related teaching apparatus for use with young children who do not have a complete mastery of a relationship between upper-case and lower-case letters, comprising a computer keyboard having a plurality of individual keys, at least a portion of said individual keys including a glyph of an upper-case letter and a glyph of an associated lower-case letter, wherein said

exist. This keyboard overlay preferably includes a plurality of individual key accommodating structures 106. In a preferred embodiment, at least the top surface 108 of these key accommodating structures 106 is transparent to allow the indication on the individual keys 110 of the keyboard 104 to be visible through the overlay for perception by the user as may be seen in FIG. 1b. This keyboard overlay 102 is preferably fabricated from a thin flexible material as is well known in the art to allow for proper actuation of individual keys upon selection by a user. In the embodiment of the present invention illustrated in FIG. 1a, the entire keyboard overlay 102 is fabricated from a thin transparent material such that all indications and markings on the computer keyboard 104 may be visible therethrough.

[0039] An alternate embodiment of the teaching apparatus of the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 2a for use with ergonomically designed computer keyboards 104'. As may be seen from ~~this~~ FIG. 2b, the keyboard overlay 102' also includes a plurality of individual key accommodating structures 106 that are specifically designed to accommodate the keys of the ergonomic 104'. One skilled in the art will recognize that alternate constructions of the teaching apparatus 100 of the present invention may be made to fit keyboards of alternate constructions without departing from the scope or spirit of the present invention, and therefore are reserved herein. One skilled in the art will also recognize that, while the embodiments illustrated in FIG. 1a and FIG. 2a are shown as being transparent, or as having at least the top surface 108 of the individual key accommodating structures 106 being transparent, portions or the entirety of the keyboard overlay may be opaque. In such an embodiment preferably the information identifying each individual key will be included on the overlay such that a user may easily identify the individual keys. Of importance, the teaching apparatus of the present invention preferably displays both upper case and lower case letters in association with one another so that the education of the early learner may be further supported through the use of such an embodiment.

[0043] FIG. 4 illustrates an embodiment of the teaching apparatus 100 of the present invention. This apparatus 100 may be constructed as discussed above with regard to FIG. 1a from a standard keyboard 104 and a keyboard overlay 102. Alternatively, this embodiment of the teaching apparatus 100 may comprise a keyboard 118 having a plurality of individual

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:
Dawn Marie Schwarzkopf

Art Unit: 3712

Application No.: 09/920,676

Examiner: Dmitry Suhol

Filed: August 2, 2001

For: TEACHING APPARATUS AND METHOD OF ENABLING USE OF KEYBOARD BY YOUNG CHILDREN

PENDING CLAIMS AFTER AMENDMENTS RECITED IN RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION DATED AUGUST 19, 2002

1. A computer-related teaching apparatus for use with a computer keyboard and a computer, comprising a keyboard overlay adapted to cover at least a portion of the computer keyboard, said keyboard overlay having a plurality of individual key-accommodating structures, each said structure having at least a transparent upper surface to allow printed indicia on a key of the keyboard to be visible therethrough, and at least a portion of said transparent upper surfaces of said key-accommodating structures that correspond to alphabet keys of the keyboard having a lower-case letter positioned thereon in a non-interfering location relative to a position of the printed indicia on the alphabet key.

2. The teaching apparatus of claim 1, wherein the printed indicia on the alphabet keys of the keyboard is positioned in a first quadrant of the key, and wherein said lower-case letter is positioned in a fourth quadrant of said transparent upper surface of said key-accommodating structures.

3. The teaching apparatus of claim 1, wherein the printed indicia on the alphabet keys of the keyboard is positioned in a first quadrant of the key, and wherein said lower-case letter is positioned in a second quadrant of said transparent upper surface of said key-accommodating structures.

4. The teaching apparatus of claim 1, wherein the printed indicia on the alphabet keys of the keyboard is positioned in a first quadrant of the key, and wherein said lower-case letter is positioned in a third quadrant of said transparent upper surface of said key-accommodating structures.

5. The teaching apparatus of claim 1 for use in an educational environment utilizing a first font style with which to teach children, wherein said lower-case letters are rendered in said first font style.

6. The teaching apparatus of claim 5, wherein said first font style is D'Nealian.

7. The teaching apparatus of claim 5, wherein said first font style is Zaner Bloser.

8. The teaching apparatus of claim 1, wherein said lower-case letter is positioned on an under surface of said transparent upper surface of said individual key-accommodating structure.

9. The teaching apparatus of claim 8, further comprising a transparent protective layer attached to said under surface of said transparent upper surface of said individual key-accommodating structure such that said lower-case letter is positioned between said transparent upper surface and said transparent protective layer.

10. The teaching apparatus of claim 1, wherein said keyboard overlay is adapted to cover a whole of the keyboard.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Once amended) The teaching apparatus of claim 15, wherein said glyph of an upper-case letter and said glyph of said lower-case letter are positioned in a horizontal relationship to one another in a plane of said keys.

13. (Once amended) The teaching apparatus of claim 15, wherein said glyph of an upper-case letter and said glyph of said lower-case letter are positioned in a diagonal relationship to one another in a plane of said keys.

14. (Once amended) The teaching apparatus of claim 15, wherein said glyph of an upper-case letter and said glyph of said lower-case letter are positioned in a vertical relationship to one another in a plane of said keys.

15. (Once amended) A computer-related teaching apparatus for use with young children who do not have a complete mastery of a relationship between upper-case and lower-case letters, comprising a computer keyboard having a plurality of individual keys, at least a portion of said individual keys including a glyph of an upper-case letter and a glyph of an associated lower-case letter, wherein said glyph of said upper-case letter is positioned on said keys, and wherein said glyph of said lower-case letter is positioned on a layer that is overlaid on the keys.

16. (Once Amended) The teaching apparatus of claim 15, wherein said layer is adhesively attached on individual keys.

17. The teaching apparatus of claim 15, wherein said layer is formed into a keyboard overlay having a plurality of individual key-accommodating structures, each structure having at least a transparent upper surface to allow said glyph of an upper-case letter on said keys to be visible therethrough, said glyph of a lower-case letter positioned thereon in a non-interfering location relative to a position of said glyph of an upper-case letter on the keys.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Once amended) A method of enabling a person who does not have complete mastery of a relationship between upper-case and lower-case letters to enter data

into a computer, comprising the step of providing a data entry device that displays both upper and lower case letters in association with one another wherein the step of providing a data entry device that displays both upper and lower case letters in association with one another comprises the step of providing a computer keyboard, and a computer keyboard overlay having a plurality of individual key-accommodating structures, each structure having at least a transparent upper surface to allow printed indicia on a key of the computer keyboard to be visible therethrough, and at least a portion of said transparent upper surfaces of the key-accommodating structures that correspond to alphabet keys of the computer keyboard having a lower-case letter positioned thereon in a non-interfering location relative to a position of the printed indicia on the alphabet key.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Once amended) The method of claim 19, wherein the step of providing a data entry device that displays both upper and lower case letters in association with one another comprises the step of applying transparent stickers having a lower-case letter displayed thereon to associated alphabet keys of a computer keyboard in a position such that both upper and lower case letters are displayed thereon.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)